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# Fourth of July: Safety with celebration

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On the Fourth of July we celebrate our Independence and the founding of our nation 236 years ago. The Fourth is also time for fireworks, cookouts and spending time outdoors with your family and friends. Enjoy the holiday, and remember a few easy precautions can help you and your family stay safe and healthy on Independence Day and throughout the summer.

One of the most important summer precautions is to protect your skin by limiting your sun exposure and using sunscreen. The sun is strongest during the middle of the day, so you can plan your outdoor celebration for earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. Wear clothing that covers your skin, use sunglasses to protect your eyes, and apply and re-apply sunscreen when necessary. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently published new rules and recommendations for sunscreen. You can read more about the FDA's

sunscreen recommendation by clicking [here](#). Proper sun safety can minimize painful sunburns and long-term damage to the skin, including the risk of skin cancer.

The sun not only burns, it can also lead to dehydration. Proper hydration is critical during any outdoor activity, especially if it is strenuous. Dehydration causes headaches, discomfort, vomiting and even death if it goes on too long and is untreated. The best way to prevent dehydration is to drink plenty of liquids. To treat dehydration, it is best to drink small amounts of liquid frequently, rather than forcing down a large amount all at once. Water, juice, popsicles and electrolyte solutions are effective ways of both preventing and treating dehydration.

No Fourth of July is complete without fireworks, but these are often best left to professionals. If you decide to have fireworks at your celebration, monitor those around you, particularly children, and moderate any alcohol consumption. Never let children light or play with fireworks, and even items like sparklers can be dangerous. It is possible to use fireworks safely, so long as you follow the safety instructions. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers more firework safety tips at their website by clicking [here](#).

Keep these other suggestions in mind to make your family's Fourth of July activities safer:

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- Practice water safety and carefully monitor children at pools and beaches.
- Watch for signs of asthma or heat exhaustion in children.
- After spending time outside, check for ticks to avoid Lyme disease.
- Use insect repellent to avoid bug bites and stings.
- When cooking outside, don't leave food out in the sun, cook it thoroughly and have a clean grilling space.

Whether it's a barbeque in the back yard, a hiking trip in the mountains or a day at the beach, safety on the Fourth starts with your good example. If your children see you applying sunscreen and practicing responsible summer behavior, they are more likely to adopt these health promoting habits. Read more about summer safety on [TRICARE's Healthy Living page](#).

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